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SEYMOUR

TO VERHAEREN, AND OTHER  
POEMS



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# OVERHAEREN

and OTHER POEMS ∴ ∴ ∴

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

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John C. Gregory  
1917.

Paper  
wrapper

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TO VERHAEREN



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TO  
VERHAEREN

AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

*With an Introduction*

*by*

EUGENE MASON

*And a Cover Design*

*by*

CHRISTINE GREGORY

LONDON

JOHN G. WILSON

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### AUTHOR'S NOTE

*This volume was in the printer's hands and nearly ready for publication when news arrived of Emile Verhaeren's tragic death at Rouen. The title poem was written two years ago, and for many months I had cherished the hope that the great Belgian would handle and read my published tribute. That may not be ; but I remember with pleasure his warm and generous acknowledgment of the MS.*

*My thanks are due to Miss Christine Gregory for her admirable cover design, so expressive of that world of factories and chimneys which Verhaeren shaped and interpreted in his poetry.*

W.K.S.

## Introduction

WITH the generosity of the young, Mr. Seymour has asked me to write a short preface to this his second volume of poems. I avail myself of the privilege gladly, recalling, as I do, the grace and freshness of those earlier verses included in *The Street of Dreams*. It is not my intention to anticipate a critical judgment on these poems, nor—more especially—to indicate to a reader the particular quality of pleasure I may think he should derive from their perusal. Taste and the individual palate appreciate in their own fashion. My purpose is more simple. I propose to disentangle in my own mind, and to make clear to myself, the sources of the repeated pleasure I find in many of the verses in this book. Perhaps, even, Mr. Seymour may not relish the qualities for which I admire his work. You may praise a woman's hair, and find, to your dismay, that she is appreciative of her eyes; or you may venerate a saint for his zeal, to learn that he prides himself on the sweetness of his temper.

The distinctive quality most to my taste in these pages is their sense of beauty. The poems included here are mainly lyrical, and their movement is amongst lovely things. I do not know that Beauty is a quality with which artists are chiefly concerned in our time.

It is obvious that music, painting, poetry, indeed art in all its chief manifestations, is occupied with other values. Art to-day (at least when it dares to turn its eyes from the war) is interested in the expression of emotion, in the science of its mechanics, in the message of which it seeks to be the vehicle. All these are good things enough, but—emotion, technique, beauty, these three, the greatest of these is Beauty. Carried away by undue stress of emotion the singer is liable to strain his voice. An overmastering preoccupation with his message may cause a writer to be more concerned with the dynamite in the cart than with the smooth running of the conveyance. He is tempted to imitate Herrick—Herrick the reverend divine, not Herrick the poet—who, finding he could not keep his congregation awake, threw the manuscript of his sermon at their heads.

Mr. Seymour—and it is my reproach against him—is a young poet who has not lost faith in Beauty. It is impossible to read a poem such as *Dedication* without hugging oneself in the conviction that here is a believer in that divine principle. It is, alas, true that the self-same poem leads one to fear the author hopes to rise on his dead self to higher things. I trust not, but with misgivings. The beauty to be found in these lyrics does not reside only in “dainty fine Honey-Pellets of words, and everything so said and done, as if it were all Spice and Garnish.” It lies not merely in phrases, but rather in the vivid image of the object seen, such as *Frost Magic* and *A Silver Birch*. And it is much to say that the search for Beauty is continued beyond the entrancing—if somewhat obvious—ways of Nature, and finds remarkable expression in the trivial round of the Bobbin-Winder, in the sonnet entitled *Respite*.

I have mentioned Mr. Seymour's use of the sonnet, but whilst admitting his great dexterity of treatment, I cannot but think his muse moves even more freely without shackles. She passes very lightly through the

ode, or that fashion of free verse in which the length of the line varies according to the thought or the emotion expressed. Several of the best poems that follow are written in this method, noticeably one addressed to the great Belgian poet who was but lately our country's guest. It is a form allowing the maximum of freedom and spontaneity, and is obviously peculiarly congenial to Mr. Seymour's temperament and art. After all, the apparatus of art, the technical side of the craft, can no more be kept out of poetry than out of machinery, and it is just because Mr. Seymour is so skilful an artisan in rhythmical form—that his craftsmanship so adequately embodies his conception of Beauty—that one considers his work as poetry rather than as prose.

EUGENE MASON

EMILE VERHAEREN

IN MEMORIAM

*Death, reaping the mad world, his crimson blade  
Wearily swinging,  
Saw him and all the beauty that he made,  
And heard him singing*

*Immortal mockery of Death, and said  
(Wearily swinging)  
"Thus lay I low another dreamer's head!"  
And stilled his singing.*

*But his proud dreams, a lyric throng, arose  
(Ah, deathless singing!) . . . .  
Lo, there, 'tis Death! how piteously he goes,  
Wearily swinging.*



## TO EMILE VERHAEREN

Poet, we sing you welcome. Once before  
You lingered in this city for the dreams  
Its vastness brought.  
In thick wet fogs you sought  
Balm for a fevered spirit sick and sore.  
The spectral beauty of the street-lamp's  
gleams  
Some mystic message bore  
To your tired heart and great mind overprest;  
You took our black confusion to your breast,  
Our drab immensity  
You made your misery,  
Our din and strife and swirling wretchedness  
O'erswept you with distress.

Of alien speech to us, you could not cry  
Aloud to English ears,  
"Heed me, for I am lonely and distraught  
For Beauty, I am fevered with my fears  
That fiends of sense and joy-destroying  
thought

Will bear me down." You could but sigh  
And gulp despair as wine,  
Scanning our faces and our haggard streets  
For some consoling sign,  
As one who wanders forth and mutely greets  
Unpitying eyes that shine.

You are grown tranquil now ; the calm dis-  
tilled

From out the burning flux of life is heard  
In your strong music, in the massive word  
Flung ringing from the anvil, where it thrilled  
Perfect through anguish. You have given us  
songs

Of the world's swirling throngs,  
Man's giant ministrants, metallic slaves  
Whirring and panting for his dream of Ease,  
Tended by other slaves who, cursing, trudge  
Daily from living graves  
For guerdon of the drudge . . . . .

Master, you gave us these !

And all the turmoil of our Babylon,  
Dim brothels, flaring ginshops, fœtid slums,  
You have portrayed till we vibrate with you,  
Until we hear the threatening noise that  
hums

In the vast vortex, and with terror view  
The welter of a world without a sun.

And sometimes you delight in broad coarse  
laughter,

Reveal a bygone day which drank and sang,  
And rollicks still on riotous canvases ;  
Renew old famous names, and show them,  
after

A loud carouse that lurched them to their  
knees,  
Painting a Bacchus while the rafters rang.

You make a music of all things you see.

A cowherd loosely sprawled beneath a tree

Is sung immortally.

There where she sleeps and dreams

The morning sunlight gleams

And the small willow-shadows softly trace

Patterns upon her face.

You sing rude peasants in their mire, nor  
gloss

Their uncouth ways with comfortable speech ;

You reckon their small gain and infinite loss,

Consider them, nor preach :

Souls robbed of loveliness and light, flung  
down

By Circumstance to weave Earth's harvest-  
crown.

True poet of your people, proud to sing

Of various life, and aims

Diverse ! Frank prophet of an age

That too much glory for its follies claims !

Acceptor of the gage

That Ugliness will ever loudly fling

At dreamers' feet ! Passionate, yet serene,

Your songs pulsate with beauty, nor alone

The beauty of fair surfaces, forms seen

Contentedly by eyes that light to grace

And cloud at a marred face,

But the thwart loveliness in meanest things,

The stifled music in the harlot's moan,

The restless beat of unavailing wings,

The still lute's ruined strings—

These, these you make your own!

## DEDICATION

*Unto a Poet came  
Grave counsel measured with no mortal stress,  
That he,  
Enrapt with dreams of youth and loveliness,  
Might claim  
His heritage of service and be free.*

Wherefore this gift of thine,  
This gift of making language sing like birds,  
This magic gift of words,  
If not to shape a portent and a sign,  
If not to tell the deep unuttered woes,  
The fruitless striving, unheroic pain,  
And small defeats of those  
For whom life has no beauty,  
To whom the world cries "Duty!"  
And giveth labour, but withholdeth gain?

You have sung Youth,  
And Youth's desire and ecstasy, its dream  
Of tenderness and ruth,  
Its pure ideals, infinite regrets,  
And dazzling joys;  
But he who sings thus ever and forgets  
Man's life complete, employs  
His gift of music on a fading theme.

Starlight and silence, sunrise and bright noon,  
Cloud-billows on a sky of burning blue,  
The sad and spectral moon,  
Mountains made mystic in a dreamful haze,  
Cypress and peaceful yew,  
Stream-lilt, wind-music, all the gorse ablaze,  
The undulating beauty of the sea,

Cliff-fringes ever waving lazily,  
 The skylark's spiral climb athrill with song,  
 Old loves and histories, the radiant throng  
 Of gods and peerless maids,  
 Strange fantasies of other worlds than ours,  
 And wizard faery raids  
 In battle-fields of flowers :  
 These might you sing and spill an anodyne  
 Of beauty for your soul ;  
 Yet O, unshaped the portent and the sign,  
 And still obscure the goal !  
 For how can you luxuriously take  
 These beauties for your themes ?  
 The world's a broken viol, and its strings  
 Snap with confusion and defeat of dreams,  
 Oppression, War, and the unresting ache  
 And torment of the poor. And One who  
     sings —  
 The Infinite Spirit of Good—draws cadence  
     sad  
 From some still-sounding strings . . . and  
     waits . . . and hopes . . .  
 For those who have the vision to arise  
 And go new-clad  
 In robes of service where the Ideal gropes  
 Through glooms of hate and murk of selfish  
     aims,  
 Past immemorial shames,  
 Towards Love's illumined skies.

*The little dreams, the beautiful frail dreams,  
 In careless moments spun,  
 Fled as his spirit saw the awful gleams  
 Of the new Vision.*

## THE LITTLE PEOPLES

All day the terror and imagined crash  
 Of battle surged and burst upon my brain,  
 Denying calm. Dawn came with bugles  
     blown,

Drum-taps, cockcrowing and the metalled  
     tread

Of soldiers hurrying to the insistent call.  
 The last gate swung, the footfalls died away,  
 Morning was spilling silver o'er the streets  
 As those young men were one by one replying  
 To roll-call in the sparse and frosted fields.  
 Clean, life-delighted lads, a laughing throng  
 Careless and blithe . . . . the torment  
     throbbed and burned.

I rose with desperate quietness and moved  
 Softly about the gray and silent room,  
 Seeing through slaughterous haze of battle-  
     ground

Visioned before me, Man's afflicted soul  
 In crucifixion crying out for life.

Thus with an opening gloom the day began,  
 Sorrow which deepened with the printed tales  
 Of shocks stupendous, mightier holocausts



Than barbarous ages knew. My heart was  
bitter

For shattered dreams and beauty desecrate,  
The world's hope shrivelled silently to dust,  
Life was a crazy beast that battered Life,  
And Death had shed her magnanimity.  
One sight was balm to me, and lifted up  
Spirit and sense—a silver birchen tree  
Tranquil, though Winter raged amid his  
boughs

Intent to manacle insurgent Spring.  
Gazing upon his lissom body and arms,  
My mind's dark vault was shot with sudden  
light,  
And for awhile the terror faded by.

Night came, with treasure folded in a veil  
Of stars, Sleep, washed with subtle anodynes  
To still the fretful heart and cancel out  
Of memory the trivial jars of day ;  
But not o'er me she bowed with healing kiss  
Of utter peace until the laggard hours  
Had trudged to hailing of another dawn :  
And still her boon was wrought capriciously.

. . . . I dreamed that gaunt and spectral  
figures stood  
About me in a vast and twilit space,  
With piteous declamation striving each  
To fashion grief in words. They said they  
were  
The little nations harassed and laid waste  
By giant foes : their lips were thin and drawn,

Sunken their eyes, and in their fleshless  
cheeks

Lurked deathly shadows. Yet a dignity  
Surpassing all the pride of fabled kings  
Shaped on their brows; and in the curious  
state

Of dreams when forms seem real I to weeping  
Fell for pity of their plight.

One spake and said :

“ I anguish for a credulous belief  
In the sealed words of great ones. I was  
given—

For ease and respite after many wars  
Fought by strange hosts upon my level  
plains—

Assurance of respect, and felt secure ;  
When lo ! one who had plighted me his word  
Unloosed his hordes upon my peaceful fields,  
Laid cities waste, destroyed immortal fanes,  
Callously slaughtered, and made mock of  
Right.

What could I ? I am exiled and aghast.”

Then, as brave Belgium ceased, another  
cried :

“ My sorrow I have long rehearsed in years  
Of bondage nigh as pitiless as War.

War is an active horror, but I know  
The clank of other steel, the steel of chains—  
I, who have been the sport of snatching dogs,  
Victim of treacherous kings, suppressed, dis-  
crowned,



But sovereign of my soul. My homesteads  
 burn,  
 My people sorrow in strange camps ; but yet  
 Time gives redress ! " The soul of Poland  
 blazed.

Another spake, and infinite despair  
 Throbb'd in her voice : " The soul of Serbia I.  
 Through centuries I struggled towards a  
 dream  
 Of nationhood, though sorely pressed and  
 hurt  
 By fury of the Turk's malevolence.  
 I had upraised a house wherein my children  
 Might gather and be free, might tell old tales,  
 Work, and achieve a happiness delayed.  
 But I was small, and courage counts for  
 nought  
 When giant neighbours covet in their pride ;  
 Yea, though my sons were each a Hercules,  
 The mightier hordes prevail. I am outcast,  
 Flung utterly upon a tragic world."

A piteous brow then bent to me. " I am,"  
 She said, " the phantom of a ghost, the soul  
 Of that unhappy and unaided land,  
 Armenia. My people have been taken,  
 And to a lust of murder limitless  
 Made victims, till our homesteads stood in  
 blood.

Yea, whilst these others saw opposing hosts  
 Thunder in conflict, we from quiet places  
 Were harried forth in droves and massacred  
 By fiends fanatic, ministers of shame."

Even as she ceased a form majestic  
 Drew near those stricken shapes. Her eyes  
       were lit

With an ideal radiance, her lips  
 Blossomed with speech solicitous and mild.  
 She said : " Beyond your sorrows, hapless  
       ones,

From ashes, phoenix-wise, the Future rises,  
 Golden with promise of a sanity  
 Rebuking the wild horror and unrest  
 Of these mad days. Mankind shall make  
       secure

A world that Man has ravaged in his pride,  
 And all the grievous toll that you have paid  
 Of broken life and violated shrines,  
 Of ruined homes and innocence outraged,  
 Shall seal to Right a surer sanctity  
 And strip Brutality of its disguise."

. . . . I started on a sudden, and was 'ware  
 That I had dreamed. The gradual dawn was  
       flowing

About my room : drums sounded, bugles  
       rang,

And on the pavement laughing lads were  
       running

To roll-call in the sparse and frosted fields.

## THE DEATHLESS DEAD

(IN MEMORIAM S. C.)

To all our valiant dead,  
To those who gave  
Youth and desire of ardent, glorious life,  
In utter lowlihead  
For England that she prosper in this strife ;  
Who marched with dauntless tread  
Through carnage to the grave,  
We bow our heads and cry :  
“ You who were proud to die  
For deathless Liberty,  
Rest, trusting well that we  
Have shrined your memory,  
With grief and joy and praise,  
So that the future days,  
Passing, shall light your scorn  
Of life with life reborn,  
Fuller because you fell,  
Cleaner because you died,  
Richer because you royally laid down  
Your springtide crown  
Of life to crush a thing intolerable  
And an insensate pride.”

Mourn, England, far and wide,  
Mourn, mourn with grief and pride  
These sons who gladly died,  
Nor let your olden shames be seen again.  
Cleanse from your quickened soul  
The tolerated stain  
Of poverty that went  
Age-long with body bent,  
Low-browed and ignorant of all save pain  
And labour without gain.

The vision which you saw,  
 England, of your disputed goal  
 Of Freedom, make your law,  
 And where Oppression lifts a hateful head  
 Strike, till the thing be dead—  
 Strike, for your sons who bled.

Yea, for the flag of England which has flown  
 For Liberty in France,  
 Which yet shall flourish o'er the mosques and  
       spires

Of those who wreak their terrible desires  
 On peoples not their own,  
 Shall it not still advance,  
 Still proudly symboling the strong and free,  
 Still prompting courage in the slave that  
       quails,

Into our towns and cities where life fails,  
 Unheeded, and goes out in servitude,  
 Where, through the multitude,  
 Ride those whom Liberty  
 Must loathe, whose lips still shape her name,  
 Whose hearts are fens of tyranny and shame,  
 Whom yet our laws permit to gather men  
 And women, and for pride of purse control  
 (As animals are tethered in a pen),  
 Thwarting to atrophy the human soul?

Amid the welter of unrecking toil  
 Where Beauty is a stranger only guessed  
 In tawdriness and glare,  
 Where Humour is the crude and simian jest  
 And Music dribbling foolishness and blare,  
 Here is the fitting soil

For nurturing the seed that is a dream—  
*England!*

Freedom for which her sons have died shall be  
 Here treasured as a shining sanctity,  
 Even here, where rich men scheme  
 To dupe the poor and weak,  
 The potent dead shall speak  
 Of Freedom and be heard  
 Because they died for that immortal word ;  
 Even here, where children die  
 And few men question why,  
 Even here, where women hire  
 Their bodies out for bread,  
 Here shall the seed aspire,  
 And here lift up its head—  
 Freedom !—*for which they bled.*

O splendid English dead,  
 Martyrs who gladly gave  
 Youth and desire of ardent, glorious life,  
 In utter lowlihead  
 For England that she prosper in this strife,  
 Rest, trusting well that we  
 Have shrined your memory,  
 With grief and joy and praise,  
 So that the future days,  
 Passing, shall light your scorn  
 Of life with life reborn,  
 Fuller because you fell,  
 Cleaner because you died,  
 Richer because you royally laid down  
 Your springtide crown  
 Of life to crush a thing intolerable  
 And an insensate pride.

## LIGHT-BRINGERS

Fain would I make a song for you  
 Of joyous praise and prophesy,  
 Who, when the Age was shackled, knew  
 The worth of Liberty—  
 Women, whose shining brows and grave,  
     sweet eyes  
 Made sundawn for our skies;  
 Spirits who scorned the darkness that was day,  
 The dolour and the pain;  
 Denied delights that lure the soul away  
 From heights it would attain;  
 Strove, while a jeering world  
 Its ribald censures hurled;  
 With torn and bleeding fingers toiled to break  
 Age-long, merciless gyves ;  
 Said, the endeavour and the dream shall take  
 All that we have, and make  
 A heritage and hope for a myriad lives.

Sadly your sisters fared,  
 Or carelessly, the broad and twilit plain:  
 You turned to them, you beckoned—and  
     despaired ;  
 Cried out to them—in vain,  
 In vain it seemed; and whisperings of the air  
 Made days discreetly spent  
 In windless ways of effortless content  
 Desirable and fair.



But these you overcame, and pointed where  
The vision-crested hills  
Called to endeavour and high purposes,  
By roads where laughing Ease  
Comes seldom, and the dim light spills  
Distrust and fear and the slow doubt that kills.  
Therefore, because you triumphed without  
praise,

Splendidly unaware  
Of aught save Love's pure mission, I would  
snare

A music golden and rare  
To sing your radiance in our brightening days;  
Hymning with you all those  
Souls inarticulate who saw their woes  
Mirrored in your grave eyes ;  
Chanting the endless throngs,  
Joyous, elate, who rise  
Freed by Love's strength to sing Life's im-  
memorial songs.

## EXPIATION

“What healing shall be found, yea, what  
balm given

To Man, sore-stricken in disastrous strife,  
Ravaged by War in ruined fields of life,  
Harried by Pride, by Hatred torn and riven !  
Where shall he turn whom weariness has  
driven

From ways where monstrous massacre is rife ?  
Bloodstained, and fumbling with a broken  
knife,

What stream shall cool his spirit under  
heaven ? ”

And no balm was sufficient, and his healing  
Was piteous and long and nowise sweet ;  
And when he fared forth gasping with the  
heat

And fury of his strife, no stream came stealing  
For laving of his worn and wounded feet. . .  
And overhead great birds were darkly  
wheeling.



## SPRING, 1916

As one man, scarred and broken, limps beside  
 Another straight and comely ; as a bride,  
 Splendid in health and beauty, walks adream  
 By tottering Age ; as a majestic spire  
 Towers 'mid cringing hovels ; so the dire  
 Onset of war leaves seared and desolate  
 Once lovely lands where Spring was wont in  
                   state

To revel ; while the neighbouring regions  
                   still

Put on her gorgeous panoplies, and thrill  
 As ever to her touch. The earth is sad  
 With tramping of armed men, and mad  
 Shrieking of guns, and all War's impious  
                   noise ;

Yet in our English woods the olden joys  
 Of lyric throats and odorous blooms unfold,  
 The broad Downs flaunt their royal studs of  
                   gold,

Primrose and violet peep, the valleys shine ;  
 But, oh ! we are not glad ; we can divine  
 How otherwise it is with Flanders' plains—  
 How, spite of sunlight and fresh April rains,  
 The beauties of the Woevre in ruin lay,  
 And peace has fled the brave Argonne—in  
                   Máý !

## TO THE WAR LORDS

CHRISTMAS, 1915

A slaughterous and wanton year is past,  
Yet Carnage is not gluttoned ; horror still  
Upon red horror piled declares your will,  
And no reft spirit moans " I am the last."  
Death's self before his victims stands aghast  
And loth your impious folly to fulfil ;  
Terror is wearied, Hell with echoes shrill  
Protests above your cannons' belch and blast.

At this most lone and desolate Christmastide  
Brown earth and white snow crimson for your  
    pride,  
Yea, at this feast of Him your lips profess,  
Moloch is sickened with his long excess,  
And his pathetic legions slower ride  
For pity of the world's immense distress.

## THE LISTENER

The lash of winds that sweep,  
The scream of gulls that flee,  
How should a woman sleep  
Who dwells beside the sea ;

With the dull, angry boom  
Of waters ever near,  
The presence-haunted gloom  
And the shouting fear ;

Her husband in his grave  
Beyond the ken of grief,  
Where Indian waters lave  
A sunken coral reef ;

A son who was his pride  
To a sea-vigil gone  
Where lurking perils hide,  
By foemen sown ?

As the sad hours creep  
Through midnight misery,  
How should a woman sleep  
Who dwells beside the sea ?

## RESPITE.

Sad and monotonous, in dismal rows,  
The bobbin-winders line the whitewashed  
    room,

Bend to their whirring labour in the gloom  
With heavy hearts until the whistle blows ;  
Then, as the engine with reluctance slows,  
And sudden palsy seizes wheel and loom,  
Dull eyes light up and pale cheeks flush and  
    bloom,

Aprons are shed and noisy mirth outflows.

Each to her home ; then, tea and errands  
    done,

A stocking darned, perhaps, and out they run  
To find Romance upon the flickering screen,  
Or, with their sweethearts, walk the glamor-  
    ous ways

Where seldom arc-lamps blossom in the green  
To shiver Youth's illusions with their rays.

## ON A CLIFF TOP

Beyond Man's ways, beyond the troublous  
show

And turmoil of the towns, beyond the stare  
And restless glitter of strange eyes, the glare  
Of tawdry signs and houses row on row ;  
Remote from the unceasing ebb and flow  
Of human tides whose currents of despair  
And hope or carelessness disturb the air  
With never-ending monotones, we grow

Happy in quietude. On this sheer height  
Above the many-coloured breeze-swept sea,  
Where great ships pass like toys upon a pool,  
'Tis ours to know Life's ancient rich delight,  
To feel Care ravelled on Joy's magic spool  
For weaving into Love's felicity.

## A SILVER BIRCH

A silver birchen tree  
Stands tranquil in delight  
Of sun and wind and rain  
By day and shadowy night.  
Squirrels with nimble glee  
Sport in his boughs at noon,  
And when the wizard moon  
Serenely climbs the sky  
Moths in a glimmering train  
Circle in spectral rings,  
And on distracted wings  
The blundering bats flit by.

He knows the distant fall  
And cadence of the stream,  
Its roar in winter spate,  
Its murmurous flow and gleam ;  
He knows the cuckoo's call,  
The nightingale, the thrush ;  
He knows the thud and rush  
Of startled deer in flight ;  
He knows the rabbit's fate  
And shriek in hidden snare ;  
And he has seen a hare  
Limp bleeding out of sight.

With leafless boughs he stands  
A proud and naked king,  
But he remembers well  
Glad thrills of every Spring,  
Feels in his withered hands  
Life pulse and surge with fire,  
Throbs with renewed desire  
And buds anew with pride.  
He, who has seen men fell  
His stately brethren, laughs  
Beneath the sun and quaffs  
Rain, and is satisfied.

## FROST MAGIC

Frost has made the world for me  
Mist and silver filigree,  
Grass and bracken, bush and tree.

When I walked abroad last night  
Naught beside the moon was white,  
Shining in her starless height.

Oaks were writhen, gaunt and black,  
Monstrous o'er the shadowed track,  
Strong to meet the wind's attack.

Night had covered with her shade  
Bush and bracken, tree and blade,  
Copse and dingle, hill and glade.

Who has seen, and who can tell  
When the sudden miracle  
Of the glittering whiteness fell?

How the frost made filigree  
Bush and bracken, blade and tree,  
In a virgin ecstasy?



## FOR A STATUE OF A SLEEPING CHILD

She sleeps, sunkissed and quiet as a flower,  
 Upon a flowered bank. Her innocent eyes  
 Are lidded for sweet dreams, and lullabies  
 Such as small pixies tune. A golden hour  
 She has lain thus, and now the cloudlets

) lower

And merge to greyness in the happy skies.  
 Poised are the blue and saffron butterflies  
 On stirless celandines. Sudden a shower

Of snowy blossom shaken from a thorn,  
 Fluttering down, betrays the ominous breeze ;  
 The grasses wave, the near pines moan and  
 sway ;

She moves, and, as the silver raindrops play,  
 Sighs for her little comrades left forlorn  
 In Faëry, by opal-misted seas.

## IRISES

These purple flags in fancy seem to me  
Delicate dames with their attendant squires—  
Green-garbed and slim—who do their just  
desires

Softly and well, and worship silently ;  
Or they are pools in a sun-smitten sea,  
Deep hid in quietude of mirrored fires,  
Decked with rich weeds and iridescent spires,  
Shells and smooth stones and the anemone.

They give rich stuffs for garnishing the halls  
Of Faëry ; Titania's robes are dyed  
From their crushed loveliness, what time the  
gold

Of daffodils is filched by Oberon's thralls  
To fashion into gems for their lord's pride  
Lest he fall sick of craving and grow old.

## DAY'S PASSAGE

Before me poplars and a plunging hill,  
 A valley of trees and pastures, and a stream  
 Winding in pale tranquillity, adream  
 With mirrored clouds serenely white and still.  
 Day passes, all reluctant to fulfil  
 His destined course, with dragging wheels  
                   that seam

The sky with ruts of fire that glow and gleam  
 And tincture heaven with rose and daffodil.

The moving pageant of the stream below—  
 Armour and plumes in immaterial fray—  
 Blurs into soft division, silver and black ;  
 A star burns by an island, and I know  
 That where was flame and passionate light  
                   of Day

The sad moon climbs her lone and weary  
                   track.

FOR CHRISTINE GREGORY'S  
'IDEAL ASPIRATION AND COMPROMISE'

This is your sculpture then, this frozen  
thought

Poignant in its still loveliness. You saw  
In spaced imagination shapes that were  
For you the symbols and the living forms  
Of life,—Youth, godlike, striding on, aglow  
With fire of the ideal ; in her eyes  
Unclouded aspiration and the gleam  
Of starry certainties ; her hands thrust forth  
Exultantly to clasp the promise seen  
In distant vision, but the bodeful arm  
Of her sad elder, seated by the way  
Mistrustful of the end, would stay those feet  
Impatient for the heights, till, wearying  
They fail upon the path, and the light fades,  
A dim mirage within a waste of dreams.

And in that flame-drawn youth is all the  
strength

And splendour of perfection: she for you  
Is the eternal impulse and desire  
Which checks the harsh corrosion of our clay  
And makes us nearer godhead ; she for you  
Is beauty that will never be frustrate  
By webs of circumstance ; she is the thought

Ideal that will ring in utterance  
 Though the whole earth shout clamorous  
     disregard ;  
 She is the soul of martyrs, who have borne  
 The fury and derision of the world,  
 Upon the rack, or in the foetid cell,  
 Or in the fire that leaped to light a throng  
 Of hard unseeing eyes ; and the intense,  
 Proud agony of poets shaping songs  
 In unacknowledged harmonies which swell  
 To music of immortal influence ;  
 And in her gesture is defiance hurled  
 In teeth of tyrant kings, and all the force  
 Of all renascent peoples. Heavy-browed  
 And brooding men, by little tubes of glass  
 And strange heaven-scanning instruments  
     have come  
 To likeness of her ; she has wrought the  
     chords  
 Of symphonies that sound along the world,  
 Weaving a solace and a recompense  
 For heartache and uncomeliness ; for her  
 Grey canvases and marbles have become  
 The light and form of beauty.

                                    And for you  
 That thwarting arm outstretched, though yet  
     unseen,  
 Unfelt, is timorous uncertainty  
 Of aim ; or interest ; or dull content  
 Crying that what has been, though moulded  
     ill,  
 Is best.

“ Distrust and quench the indignant  
flame

Which rises in your soul ; it will consume  
The tranquil happiness of years ; and dreams  
Wilt on the cruel stones of life. Sink down  
In quietude of beautiful repose  
Beside me. Souls were bitter and oppressed  
Before you came to knowledge, and will be  
Though you shake heaven with protest.

Falter down,  
And if there be ameliorating deeds  
That we may softly do, let them be done,  
Nor craze yourself with unavailing cries  
For beauty unattainable, for lo,  
The centuries spread beauty at your feet.”

Ah, could your sculptured symbols tell the  
whole

Of the eternal problem ! but they are  
Essentials of a conflict that will be  
The glory and the sorrow of the world  
Until the world makes end.

## DAWN

After a frenzied night  
Of battling winds and rain ;  
After the terror and tears  
Of clouds remorselessly driven ;  
The still Dawn's vanquishing spears  
Crimson the East again,  
And irresistible Light  
To wandering Man is given.



## ENCHANTMENT

With thwarted dreams my heart is filled,  
With songs whose pinions trail,  
Because old singers subtly spilled  
Enchantment for my bale ;

Music that shaped to their desire,  
Ballad and chant and tale ;  
While my songs, emulous, aspire  
On faltering wings, and fail.



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